will improve the economic prosperity of this town and its neighbourhood.

10. Until recently there was no High School in Mattancheri which was accessible to all classes of people. The T. D. High School was located within the premises of the temple, and, apart from accommodation being very unsatisfactory, it was not possible for pupils of all communities to attend this school. The question of providing a suitable building accessible to all classes has been engaging the attention of Government for many years, and it was only in the year under review it was possible to supply this much needed want. The Lower Secondary Girls' School at Mattancheri also was located in a very congested area. The two schools are now housed in two magnificent buildings which are probably the best of their kind in the State. These buildings have been built at a cost of over Rs. 1 lakh from funds provided by the Devaswam department.

11. In the current year's budget there was a provision of Rs. 50,000 for improvements to the irrigation system in the Chittur taluk. In the course of detailed investigations formidable technical difficulties were encountered, especially with regard to the construction of a high level canal leading to the Kambalatharai Eri. It was not, therefore, possible to start this work during the current year. The Public Works department is now engaged in investigating the scheme in greater detail to see if it is possible to take it on hand. It is not possible to say what the outcome of the investigation will be. Anyhow, in view of the importance of the work contemplated, a lump sum provision of Rs. 50,000 has again been made in the next budget.

LEGISLATIVE ACTIVITY

12. The legislative activity of this Council during the current year covers a very wide field, and it is not necessary for me to recount what has been done. The Government introduced a Bill to give fixity of tenure to *verumpattam* tenants. The Bill was referred to a Select Committee, and when the report of the committee was received it was found that radical changes had been made in some of the clauses of the Bill. Apart from the changes made by the Select Committee, the amendments of which notices were given by a great many members of this Council indicated that the divergence of opinion on this measure was very great. Under these circumstances Government thought that it was not possible to proceed with the consideration of this measure. While Government are fully alive to the importance

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of a measure of this kind, I should make it clear beyond doubt that Government cannot be a party to upset the entire agrarian system of the State in a revolutionary manner. While the interest of the cultivating tenant must be protected by all legitimate means, Government cannot agree to provisions which, in effect, will amount to a confiscation of the rights of the landlord. I must make it clear that, unless there is evidence that there is a general measure of agreement on the fundamental points arising out of the Bill, it will not be possible for Government to proceed with the further consideration of this measure.

13. One important piece of legislation which will be taken up during the coming year is the amendment to the Act relating to *Kuris*. The present Kuri Act is defective in many respects. The *kuri* institution occupies a very important place in the economic life of the State, and persons and institutions who conduct the *kuris* assume great responsibility to the public. The protection of the funds entrusted into the hands of the foremen is a matter of vital importance to the public and the Government. It is essential that every possible precaution must be taken to ensure that the funds are not utilised in a manner which will jeopardise the security of subscribers to the *kuri*. In view of its importance Government appointed a representative committee to examine the whole question. The report of this committee has already been published. The necessary legislation to give effect to the recommendations of this committee will be undertaken early next year. I must make it clear that it is the policy of this Government to do everything that is possible to protect the interest of persons who deposit their money in banks and who subscribe to *kuri* funds. The legislation contemplated will aim at securing this protection.

PUBLIC SERVICES

14. In my last budget speech I dwelt at length on our method of recruitment to the public services and the work of the Staff Selection Board. I announced the appointment of an independent committee to examine the working of the board and to make recommendations. After a very careful and elaborate investigation the committee submitted its report last December. It is a matter of gratification both for the Government and the public that this independent committee arrived at the conclusion that in the working of the Staff Selection Board justice had been meted out in a fair manner to all communities. Based on the recommendation of the committee, certain changes have been introduced in the rules for the

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